PRRC emerging trends

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Prejudice Against Fundamentalists Seen On Rise In Latest Survey

Recent clashes between whites and blacks have underscored the extent of racial tensions in the U.S. But a new Gallup Poll reveals a broad pattern of prejudice against diverse religious and ethnic minorities and persons with unconventional life styles.

Almost two-thirds of the public (62%), for instance, would not like to have members of minority sects or cults as neighbors. Many would not welcome religious fundamentalists (30%) or unmarried couples (23%). Substantial proportions would be inhospitable to members of various ethnic minorities, including Vietnamese (18%), Hispanics (16%), Indians or Pakistanis (15%), Koreans (14%), or blacks (12%).

Intolerance based solely on religious preference is quite rare: Relatively few Americans would object to living next door to Jews (5%), Protestants (5%) or Catholics (3%).

Comparison with earlier survey findings suggests that hostility toward religious cults, fundamentalists, and single persons sharing the same living quarters may be growing. In a 1981 poll 30% said they would not welcome cult members as neighbors, with that figure rising to 44% in 1987 and to 62% at present. Similarly, reported bias against religious fundamentalists increased from 11% in 1981 to 13% in 1987 to the current 30%. And the number who would object to having unmarried couples as neighbors has grown from 14% to 23% since 1981.

At the same time, prejudice against other groups measured in one or both of the earlier surveys — Vietnamese, Hispanics, blacks, Jews, Protestants and Catholics — has not changed significantly.

However, it should be noted that a change in survey methodology may have affected the comparative findings. Participants in the latest poll were asked whether they would or would not like to have members of each group as neighbors. In the earlier surveys they were handed lists of groups and asked to single out any they would not like as neighbors.

Few Would Welcome All

Only 18% would welcome as neighbors members of all 12 groups covered in the latest survey. Excluding cult members, to whom majorities in all major population groups would object, that figure rises to 32%.

Against this benchmark, men (35%) exhibit slightly more tolerance than women (29%); no significant difference is found between the views of whites (32%) and non-whites (31%). In general, tolerance tends to increase as educational attainment and income rise. On the whole, 18-49-year-olds (36%) are more tolerant than those 50 and older (25%).

Following are the questions and key findings:

I am going to read you a list of various groups of people. As I read each one, please tell me whether you would or would not like to have them as neighbors.

Desirability as Neighbors

	Would welcome	Would not	Not sure
	%	%	%
Catholics	94	3	3
Protestants	92	5	3
Jews	91	5	4
Blacks	83	12	5
Koreans	79	14	7
Hispanics	78	16	6
Indians, Pakistanis	78	15	7
Vietnamese	75	18	7
Russians	74	19	7
Unmarried couples	71	23	6
Religious fundamentalists	58	30	12
Religious sects, cults	31	62	7

Groups Not Wanted As Neighbors

	1989	1987	1981
	%	%	%
Sects, cults	62	44	30
Fundamentalists	30	13	11
Unmarried couples	23	12	14
Vietnamese	18	*	17
Hispanics	16	9	18
Blacks	12	13	*
Jews	5	3	2
Protestants	5	2	1
Catholics	3	1	1

*Not asked.

NOTE: In the 1987 and 1981 surveys respondents were handed lists of groups and asked to name any they would not like to have as neighbors.

Tolerance Indices

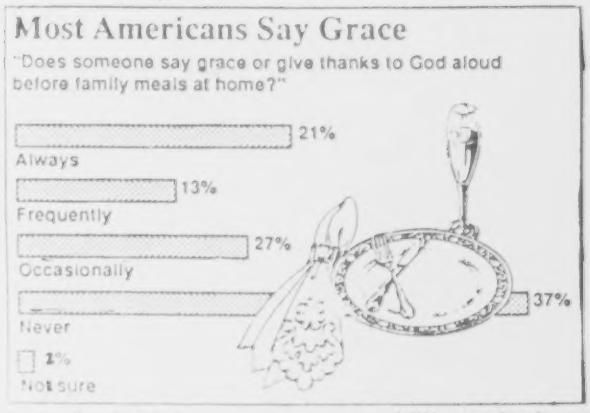
	Would welcome all groups	Would welcome most groups*
	%	%
NATIONWIDE	18	32
Men	21	35
Women	16	29
Whites	17	32
Non-whites	24	31
18-29 years	21	35
30-49 years	21	38
50 & older	13	25
College grads.	22	47
Some college	22	34
No college	15	26
$40,000 & over	23	42
$25,000-$39,999	18	34
$15,000-$24,999	13	26
Under $15,000	17	27
East	20	36
Midwest	17	30
South	15	27
West	21	37

*Excludes religious sects or cults.

The latest findings are based on telephone interviews with 1,001 adults, 18 and older, conducted nationwide Jan. 24-26. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be plus or minus 4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls. *This report conforms to the standards of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.*

Gallup Graphics



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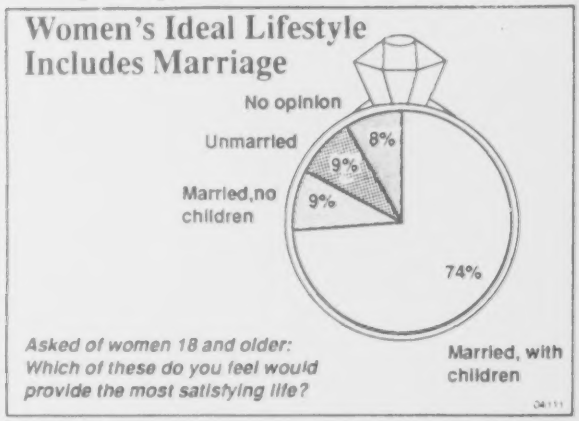

Source: The Gallup Organization

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Public Values Intangible Assets More Than Material Possessions

The American people consider the intangible aspects of their lives — their families, health, and self-respect — to be far more important that the possession of material goods or leading exciting lives. Between these extremes lie other social values, such as having a sense of accomplishment, working to improve society and following a strict moral code.

Nine in 10 participants in a recent Gallup Poll (89%) assign one of the top two positions on an 11-point scale to the importance of having a good family life. Almost as many consider having a good self-image or self-respect (85%) and being in good physical health (84%) as very important.

Ranking somewhat lower in importance are having a sense of accomplishment and lasting contribution (69%), working for the betterment of American society (67%), and following a strict moral code (60%).

The lowest-rated assets tested are leading an exciting and stimulating life, and owning a nice home, car and other belongings, with 50% and 41%, respectively, reporting these are very important to them.

Increases Noted on Bettering Society, Strict Moral Code

For the most part, Americans' present values are similar to those recorded in a late-1981 poll. However, significantly more now attach great importance to working for the betterment of society (67%) than did so in the earlier survey (51%). Following a strict moral code has also grown in acceptance, with 60% at present, compared to 47% in 1981, saying this is very important to their lives.

In his Inaugural Address President Bush stressed the need for high ethical standards in government and for volunteer efforts to help the disadvantaged.

Large majorities in all major population groups attach a great deal of importance to their family lives and self-respect. Being in good physical health is considered very important by slightly more older than younger adults and by a larger proportion of non-college attendees than college graduates.

As in the 1981 study, women, older adults, the less well-to-do and less-educated place a higher value on working for social betterment than do people from different socio-economic backgrounds.

More women than men and more older than younger adults also consider following a strict moral code to be extremely important, but education and income levels have little bearing on the public's attitudes on this value. However, the wide gulf that separated the views of people of different ages in 1981 has narrowed sharply since then. In the earlier survey, for example, twice as many Americans aged 50 and older (62%) as those under 30 (29%) felt adherence to a strict moral code was extremely important. Age now plays a less dominant role in shaping public opinion on this value, with 66% of older Americans and 53% in the youngest group placing a high degree of importance on following a strict moral code.

On the other hand, age continues to be the primary determinant of the importance people attach to leading exciting and stimulating lives. Almost two-thirds of adults under 30 (63%), compared to 49% of 30-49-year-olds and 43% of those 50 and older consider this highly important. The appeal of an exciting life style also drops as educational attainment rises: a larger proportion of Americans who did not attend a college (55%) assign this a high value than do those with some college training (47%) or a college degree (43%).

Less affluent and less-well educated Americans prize material possessions, such as a nice home, car or other belongings, more than wealthier, college-trained people do.

Following are the questions and key findings:

Using a scale from 10 to zero, please tell me how important each of the following is to you. If you think something is extremely important, you would call off the highest number, 10. If you think something is extremely unimportant, you would mention the lowest number, zero. If you think something is neither extremely important nor extremely unimportant you would mention some number between 10 and zero — the higher the number, the more important you think it is, the lower the number, the less important.

Importance of Social Values
(Percent rating each "very important")

	1989	1981
	%	%
Good family life	89	82
Self-respect	85	79
Good physical health	84	81
Sense of accomplishment	69	63
Betterment of society	67	51
Strict moral code	60	47
Exciting life	50	51
Nice home, car, etc.	41	39

NOTE: "Very important" ratings represent the top 2 positions on the scale.

Following are the latest results by major population groups:

	Good family life	Self-respect	Good health	Accomplishment
	%	%	%	%
NATIONWIDE	89	85	84	69
Men	86	81	81	65
Women	92	88	86	73
18-29 years	90	84	80	77
30-49 years	87	85	83	67
50 & older	91	85	87	65
College grads.	87	85	73	67
Some college	89	83	82	71
No college	90	85	89	69
$40,000 & over	85	83	76	68
$25,000- $39,999	89	84	87	71
Under $25,000	93	87	87	68

	Social betterment	Strict moral code	Exciting life	Nice home, car
	%	%	%	%
NATIONWIDE	67	60	50	41
Men	59	54	51	42
Women	74	66	50	41
18-29 years	58	53	63	44
30-49 years	63	58	49	38
50 & older	77	66	43	42
College grads.	56	58	43	30
Some college	62	63	47	31
No college	73	60	55	49
$40,000 & over	62	60	49	36
$25,000-$39,999	68	63	50	37
Under $25,000	71	61	53	46

The latest findings are based on telephone interviews with 1,001 adults, 18 and older, conducted nationwide Jan. 24-26. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be plus or minus 4 percentage points.

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PRRC To Offer Presentation Based On Results of Unchurched American Study

Princeton, N.J. — Stating that the results of the recently completed "Unchurched American" survey needed to have widespread availability to clergy and other church workers, George Gallup, Jr., Executive Director of the Princeton Religion Research Center, announced that the PRRC will offer consultation that will help individual churches and other religious organizations make practical use of the survey findings.

The presentation entitled, "Reaching the Unchurched American," includes an overview of the study, comparisons between the 1988 and 1978 surveys, and possible steps to reach the unchurched.

For more information on how you can schedule a presentation for your church, denomination, or religious organization, please write:

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Teens Have Positive Outlook About Marriage

Most teens expect to marry someday, want children, and want to work hard to make their marriages last, according to the latest Gallup Youth Survey.

Teens who think they will marry someday greatly outnumber those who expect to remain single, by a margin of 86 percent to 11 percent. An additional 3 percent have not yet made up their minds on the subject.

Three teens in four (76 percent) say they would like to have children someday. Only 6 percent expect to be married and not have children. The remaining teens either do not plan to marry or have not yet made any decision concerning children.

Nearly half of the teens (48 percent) say they would like to have two children. Six percent want one child, while 15 percent want three. Four or more children are desired by 6 percent of the teens.

Teens believe the nation's divorce laws are too lax, with 72 percent saying that divorces are too easy to get, compared with only 23 percent who believe they are too difficult to obtain. The laws are about right according to 3 percent of the teens, while another 3 percent have no opinion on the matter.

Two teens in three (67 percent) believe that most people who have been divorced probably did not try hard enough to save their marriages. Disagreeing are 30 percent of the teens, while 3 percent hold no opinion.

Young men (84 percent) and young women (87 percent) are about equal in expressing beliefs that they will be married someday. Young men, however, are slighly more likely than young women to say they would like to have children, by a margin of 79 percent to 74 percent.

Teens who are 16 or older, and nearing the age when they may be giving serious consideration to marriage, take the strongest stand against divorce. Older teens (76 percent) are more likely than those 13 to 15 (69 percent) to believe the divorce laws are now too lax.

The older teens, by a margin of 70 percent to 60 percent, are also more likely to say that most divorced couples probably did not try hard enough to save their marriages. Catholic teens (74 percent) are more apt than Protestants (68 percent) to believe divorces are too easily obtained, but little difference between denominations is noted on other matters concerning divorce, marriage, and children.

Students who say they are doing above-average work in school appear to have the most positive attitudes toward these matters, with 88 percent expecting to marry someday, 79 percent wanting children, and more than seven in 10 arguing that divorce laws are too lenient and that divorced couples did not work hard enough to save their marriages.

Here is how the questions were asked:

Do you think you will get married someday or remain single?

When you do get married, would you like to have children, or not?

How many children would you like to have?

Generally speaking, do you think that most people who get divorced tried hard enough to save their marriages, or not?

Generally speaking, do you think it is too easy or not easy enough for people in this country to get divorced?

The findings reported here are based on telephone interviews with a representative national cross section of 506 teen-agers, 13 through 17, conducted between June 23 and July 10, 1988.

Teen Marriage Intentions

	Would like to marry %	Want children %
NATIONAL	86	76
Male	84	79
Female	87	74
Ages 13 to 15	86	75
Ages 16 to 17	85	78
Above average students	88	79
Average and below	82	73
White-collar family background	87	78
Blue-collar family background	86	75
East	88	76
Midwest	88	82
South	82	74
West	84	74
Central cities	88	79
Suburbs	85	77
Non-metropolitan areas	84	75
Catholics	86	79
Protestants	89	78

How To Reach The Unchurched American

Millions of Americans remain unchurched, and many churches are continuing to experience losses in membership. What can be done to reach the unchurched American? How can present members be kept in the fold?

New light is shed on these pressing questions by the results of a just-completed major survey of the nation's adults, THE UNCHURCHED AMERICAN — 1988. The focus of this survey is on the factors that cause people to leave the church — and those that cause them to return.

This survey, which reports updates of many of the questions asked in the landmark survey of a decade ago (THE UNCHURCHED AMERICAN, 1978), compares and contrasts the attitudes of the churched and unchurched on social changes, lifestyle factors, basic religious beliefs and many other factors that are related to churchlessness.

Special attention in this 1988 survey has been given to the religious experience and needs of blacks and Hispanics in the United States.

The report, based on this important survey, provides full statistical details, comparisons with 1978 results, as well as a special section which offers practical steps to reach the unchurched in your community.

For good, solid, practical information that can help YOU in YOUR ministry — both in reaching new people and in deepening the commitment of the present members of your church — write for the new report, THE UNCHURCHED AMERICAN — 1988.

To place your order write: The Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O. Box 628, Princeton, NJ 08542. Cost per copy is $29.00.

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